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21 July 1955

Dear [redacted]

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Apologies for my delay both in thanking you for your hospitality of two weeks ago and in getting down to substantive thinking about your proposals.

So far as my own personal interest goes, I have little to add to what I told you. The special problem I recited is still in limbo, and casts its unpredictable shadow over my plans. Moreover, I am perfectly clear that, as you pointed out and as Dick most emphatically agrees, there could be no real question of joining your show without moving physically and full time [redacted]. This I am disinclined to do, unless it became clear that it was far and away better than other ways of adding strings to my bow, such as the recent history project I mentioned, a different type of job for Bob, or conceivably getting more mixed up in the kind of thing Dick does. In sum, I must be counted an unlikely candidate for any full-scale role.

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This of course leaves decidedly open the possibility of getting enmeshed for a limited period, or for some aspect of a job. You were kind enough to leave this door open, and I would certainly like to keep it so. My comments below suggest things in your present list that would be of great interest to me.

Let me use the rest of this letter to set down my thoughts on your list, and on the general idea behind it. For convenience I will shoot to the page and number of your memo entitled [redacted]

Criteria. I agree fully with these, except that I would add to the fourth the idea that there is real benefit in projects where you can bring to bear disciplines not normally available in the government, as well as "imagination and analytical competence." This hardly affects the size point, as you can subcontract specialized parts. Just as an example, I would be as interested in hearing an expert group psychologist deal with the probable future attitudes of peoples toward the atomic situation (your issue 2.b) as in hearing a historian or a close student of the recent behaviour of the nation in question; the combination of all three would give you the optimum view.

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1. Policy-making techniques. While I am as keen as ever personally about setting down a few ideas on this, I feel on reflection (even more strongly after talking with Dick) that the fundamental theoretical points can be described without too much difficulty, and

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just don't get you very far. The failure of present machinery seems to me due largely to the pressures on people who should be thinking (a real manpower shortage of bread-type brains, become much more acute in the past two years), and above all to the lack of any way of getting proper military advice to put alongside other forms of advice. On this latter, too, workable theoretical solutions would not be hard to devise; what is really needed is a push from the very top and a shred of brains at the top of the Pentagon. Parenthetically, I am awfully skeptical of the application of military planning techniques to cold war planning In any case, for your purposes, I would carry a study to the point of describing the present methods and of drawing the outline of the dream house, and then let it ride. Perhaps, as you went through your substantive studies, some one or more organizational ideas would become so clearly evident that they could be pulled out for their own sake without getting into a comprehensive critique.

2. Implications of military technology changes. In general, this is clearly the most challenging of your projects. Part a. has had plenty of thought in the government, notably in [] shop, but can use plenty more. It is peculiarly susceptible to handling from open materials (most of ONE's influential ones were open), with a premium on worldly judgment. On the Soviet reaction side, much more needs to be done, and again little of it needs access to classified stuff. All in all, I think this makes great sense.

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Part b. surely requires the availability of a good estimate on what the nuclear situation will actually be. Time lags will be quite considerable in many cases when you get through checking off all the factors. ONE has done a paper but even its projections are good only for broad limits. Nonetheless this is certainly worth further exploration.

Part c. seems to me in the wild blue yonder, unless [] ideas have more backing than I am aware of. I would certainly defer until you had a. and/or b. in hand.

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Part d. seems to me potentially very exciting, particularly the ramifications of the stages-of-contact approach you explained at Quantico. I would think [] should be personally approached, without being given any absolute right to dictate scope, and that he might well bite very hard. The future projections part might be particularly valuable, though again you would need a useable set of working assumptions.

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3. Processes of Change under Totalitarianism. I would be inclined to treat this kind of parallel with great reserve, but agree that there is a place for such a study. Would you not need real experts on call for each example, and if so might it not get cluttered up? At any rate it would clearly take a very firm hand and the ability to make diverse

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heads work together -- more than some of your others. I have the impression that many "experts" are long on description and short on realistic analysis of where power really lies. Either you have to have unusual "experts" or you have to have a chief who rides over them to some degree -- which I am sure can be arranged.

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7. and 8. I would be inclined to regard both of these as parts of what 2 a. should cover. As a one time student of the starting of wars, I mildly query whether 8. can be useful. Try to get a clear picture of how we didn't go to war on Indochina, or yet on the offshore islands!

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Further deponent, having said too much already, saith not.

Accept the assurances, etc. etc. etc.

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